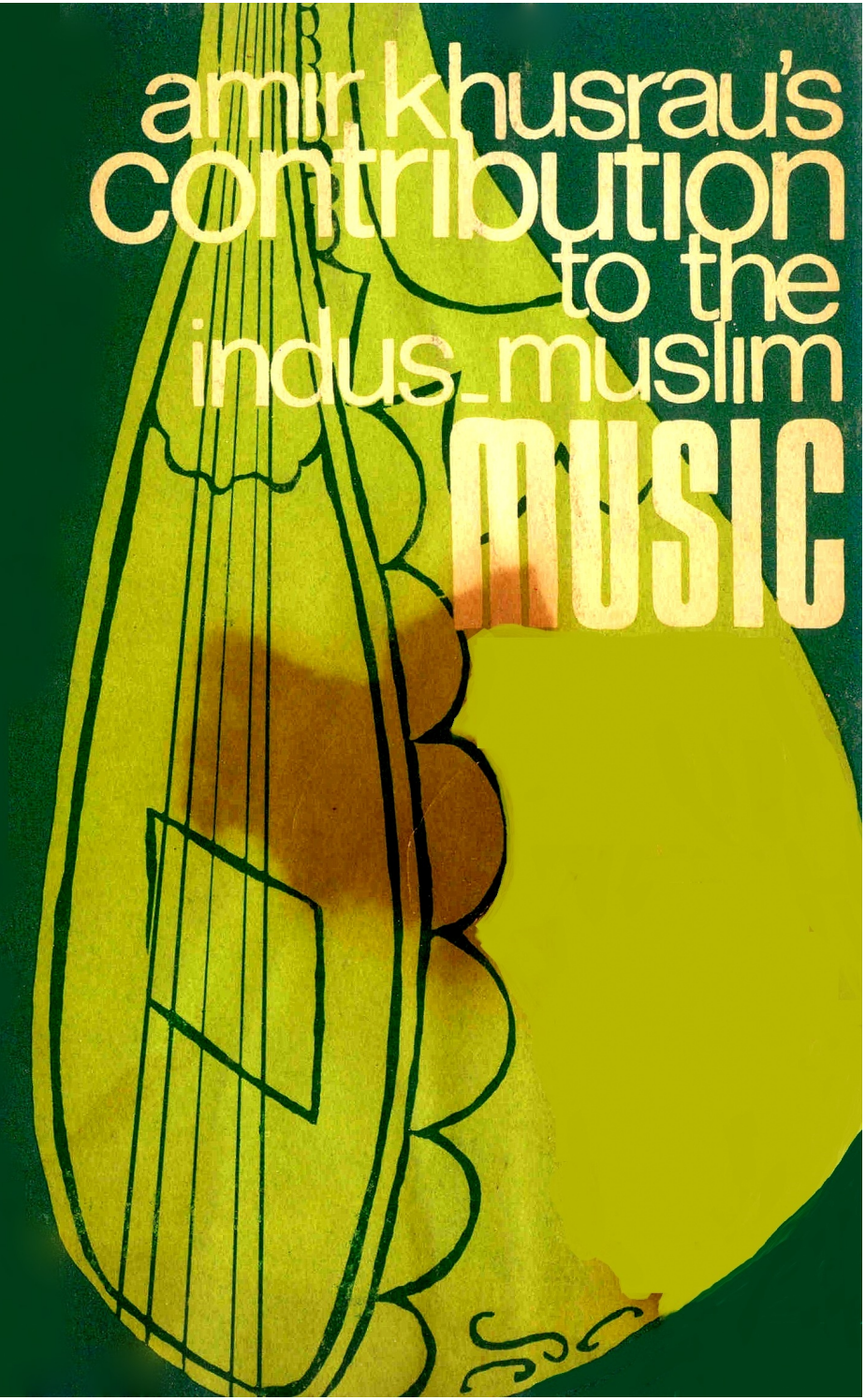
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amir khusrau's contribution to the indus-muslim MUSIC



Council of the Arts Islamabad

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amir khusrau's contribution to the indus-muslim music

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(Pakistan Branch)
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The rich tradition of the Indo-Muslim music owes its genesis to both the aspects of Khusrau's personality : the historical and the legendary. An attempt is made on the following pages to examine this phenomenon and to find out the proportion in which these two aspects played their role in the development of the music of this subcontinent.

At the very outset we are faced with a statement of Khusrau denying to have written anything on music. A musician disputed with our poet on the comparative excellence of music and poetry. This inspired him to compose a poem in which he says :

مطربے می گفت خسرو را که اے گنج سخن
علم موسیقی ز فن نظم نیکوتر بود

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ز آنکه این علمی است کز دقت نیاید در قلم
وان نه دشوارست کاندر کاغذ و دفتر بود
پاسخش گفتم که من در هر دو معنی کاملم
هر دو را سنجیده بروزنے که آن بهتر بود
نظم را کردم سه دفتر ور به تحریر آمدے
علم موسیقی سه دیگر بود ار باور بود

(A musician told Khusrau, 'O treasure-house of poetry, my science of music is better than your art,

For music cannot be put to writing even if you exert to do it, while it is not difficult to record poetry on paper and in volumes.'

I replied to him, 'I am perfect in both and have weighed the two very well.

I have compiled my poetry in three volumes and, believe me, had I put music in writing, I would have produced another three volumes'.)

Khusrau sums up the comparison in the following couplet which seems to have hardly done justice to music :

علم را حاصل عروسے دان و نغمه زیورش
نیست عیبے گر عروس خوب بے زیور بود

(In short, take poetry to be a bride and music its ornament. If a beautiful bride has no ornament, it does not bring any blemish to her.)

The above poem is in the third collection of his poetry, the **Ghurrat ul-Kamal,** which was composed when he had reached the mature age of forty-three. Nevertheless, he, in the first place, possessed tremendous potentialities of growth,

and, secondly, the Khalji Revolution of 1290 which transformed the Turkish State of Delhi into an Indian Muslim State and sprouted Khusrau's artistic genius had dawned only recently. So, all that we can conclude from the above extracts is that by the year 693/1293, when the **Ghurrat ul-Kamal** was collected, he had not yet written anything on music, though he had already acquired proficiency in this science. We can also add that it was, presumably, in Persian music that he had attained this proficiency and that he was not yet enamoured of the music and musical instruments of Hind. In Ramadan 688 (September 1289), i.e. about four years before the compilation of the said **diwan,** the poet had composed his **Qiran us-Sa'dain.** He was in his best lyrical mood at that time, and found many occasions to express the exuberance of his spirit in terms of music. There are long stanzas describing musical instruments, namely, **chang** (harp), **kasa-i-rubab** (rebeck), **nay** (windpipe) and **daff** (tambourine) and the musical scales (**parda**). But, as it is apparent from the very names of these musical instruments, they belonged to Persian musical traditions. Music of Hind is conspicuous by its absence at the happy moment when "the two auspicious stars met."

The Khaljis because of their long stay on the western borders of Indusland, i.e. modern Pakistan, had become what may be termed "the Indus Turks". Their reign brought a perceptible change in the cultural milieu of the South Asian subcontinent and inevitably influenced Khusrau's approach towards the music of Hind. At the beginning of the reign of merry Khalji monarch, Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah, Khusrau wrote a treatise (**risala**) on the "fundamental and derivative principles" (**usul-o-furu',** lit. 'roots and branches') of music which covers sixteen pages of the second volume of the **I'jaz-i-Khusrawi** printed on the large folio size. This treatise suffers from the usual florid style of Khusrau's prose works. Nevertheless, it contains useful information regarding the development of music in the subcontinent during the Khalji period, and appears to sum up Khusrau's knowledge of Per-

sian music. It also contains a letter, dated the 7th Shawwal 716 (December 24, 1316), that Khusrau drafted for Ulugh Khan and is addressed to a court musician of his time, named Badr ud-Din. It invites him to come to the court to compete with two musicians who had recently arrived from Khurasan. In this connection some questions are raised in respect of the musical traditions of Hind, which Badr ud-Din is asked to clarify. Unfortunately, **I'jaz-i-Khusrawi** has not yet been critically edited. Though the lithographed edition of the Nawalkishor Press, Lucknow, is on the whole fairly correct, it fails in accurately transcribing those texts which deal with technical subjects like music and astronomy. This grievous deficiency, combined with the opaqueness of Khusrau's own prose style, has made the treatise a closed book for the writers on his contributions to music. However, an attempt has been made here to understand some of the passages which are related to the development of the Indo-Muslim tradition of music.

Making a passing reference to the "master-musicians of Hind" (**Kalawantan-i-Hind**) Khusrau comments as follows :

از تار الاون عبدالمومن را زنار بندانند بر نهجے باعت باشند که هر دم بیک مجلس وار هندوانه سورے در دل اصحاب شیون رسانند ٠

(Through the strings of their **alawans** they make 'Abd al-Mu'min (lit. 'the slave of the All Faithful, God') wear the Brahmanical sacred thread and these **(alawans)** are emotive in such a manner that they always bring the mourners gathered at the assembly of **war-i-Hindwana** into a festive mood.)

Alawan of the above passage is evidently a stringed musical instrument of Hind. It has been more fully described by Khusrau in his poetical works which will be discussed later on.

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More exciting is the probable reference to the celebrated Panjabi ballads known as **wars.** The above passage appears to suggest that the Hindwi **wars** were recited at the assemblies of mourning which were turned into festive occasions by the exhilarating music of the **alawan.** This is partly corroborated by the historian Sujan Rai of Batala, who has described how Khusrau himself recited a poem "called **war** in the language of Hind" at an assembly held at the Palace of a Thousand Pillars to mourn the assassination of Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah Khalji and his brothers and to offer **Fatiha** for their souls. Most probably the Panjabi term **war** is derived from the Sanskrit word **vartta** (with a stress on both 'a' s), meaning 'occurrence', 'event'. It seems that originally Panjabi **wars** commemorated the 'event' of the tragic death of the hero in a battle and were associated with the assemblies held to mourn his loss. But already in Khusrau's times these assemblies were being turned into festive occasions allegedly through the magic of the music of the **alawan.** We feel that it was because of the resilient spirit of the martial tribes of the Indus Valley that the **war** grew from a simple elegy to an epic of heroic dimensions.

There is a reference to چهره بازان which we would like to read چهڑه بازان **Chhara** in present day Urdu means 'an anklet', 'bangles worn on ankles'. Probably it originally meant 'bangles worn on wrists', or just 'bangles', and the **'chhara-baz'** signifies the **malangs** and dervishes who wear metal bangles on their wrists and use them as a musical instrument.

The indigenous drum is mentioned as **tabira-i-Hindi** تبیرهٔ هندی (wrongly transcribed بتیرهٔ هندی **batira-i-Hindi),** i.e. the Hindi drum.

One of the questions raised by Khusrau in his letter to Badr ud-Din is related to the indigenous fiddle. Having compared it with the Greek rebeck he wonders :

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هندوستانیان کنگره زن چه معلوم کنند که همان عجب رود سرود
ایشان دندان سفید می کند

بخندد عجب رود بر دست او
چون هندو نوازد عجب رود خویش

(What (secret) have these Hindustani **kingra**-players discovered that the same **'ajab-rud** (as the Greek rebeck), which is their **surud,** laughs (lit. 'whitens its teeth') ?

When the Hindu plaps his **'ajab-rud,** it laughs in his hands.)

Khusrau has compared the **kingra,** i.e. the Hindi **'ajab-rud** or the Hindi **surud,** with **rubab** (rebeck) which is a kind of fiddle or violin. This makes it certain that the said musical instrument was a stringed one and was played with bow. Abul Fazl also mentions this instrument and says that the musicians **(naghma-sazan)** of Panjab, who were called **dhadhis** ڈھاڑھی (from which is derived the Urdu term **dhari** ڈھاری), used to play on the **kingra.** "They chiefly chant the praises of heroes in the field of battle", he continues "and lend fresh spirit to the fight". These **dhadhis** are the **kulanwats** (کلانوت) and **bhats** (بھاٹ) depicted by Khusrau in his **Tughlaq Namah** as swarming about the soldiers chanting songs of manly and war-like deeds. With the general decline of the society this institution too had decayed. Nevertheless, the Indus people managed to keep up this tradition till the coming of the Britishers. Burton, writing in 1851, states :

Every clan of any consequence, as, for instance, the Laghari, has its own minstrels, who attend the weddings, circumcisions, and other festive occasions, and expect to be well paid by the chief. In former times they used to accompany the head of the house to battle, armed with sword and shield, with the Surindo or Rebec in hand, praising the brave, and overwhelming cowards with satire and abuse. The people had, and still have, a great horror of their tongues. One of the Talpur family, who had not distinguished himself for bravery at the battle of Meeanee, was so much tormented by their ironical praises that he pays them liberally to keep out of his presence. Anciently the chief bards were in the service of the several Ameers ; now they are obliged to live by begging, singing in the bazaars, and attending at the different houses where any ceremony is going on. At the same time they will spend every farthing they can gain in drinking and other debauchery ; their idleness is even greater than their poverty, and their love of pleasure compels them to be most importunate in their demands for pay and largesse.

The war-ballads, the **wars** of Punjab, were called **Fath-nama** in Sindhi and according to Burton resembled in vigour the productions of the old Arab poets.

Khusrau has given some more details about the Hindi **'ajab-rud** in his **mathnawi 'Ashiqa** which we shall discuss later on.

Besides the musical instruments, Khusrau has also mentioned some musicians in this **risala.** One of them was Turmati Khatun, who was admitted to the royal court through his assistance and was subsequently placed in charge of all the Persian and Hindi court musicians. Then there was Muhammad Shah of whom he says that on the one hand he (Khusrau) sang the praises of the generous king and on the other Muhammad Shah inebriated the Sultan with his soul-stirring songs. He has also mentioned among the notable musicians of his day Amir Kunjashk, Khalifa Husaini Akhlaq and Mahmud.

A year before Khusrau wrote the above treatise on

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music he had composed his **mathnavi 'Ashiqa** narrating the true romance of Khidr Khan and Dewal Rani. Describing the festivities held to celebrate their wedding, he depicts the Hindi orchestra consisting of the (i) **alawan,** (ii) **tal,** (iii) Hindi **tabank** and (iv) Hindi **'ajab-rud.**

(i) **Alawan** (with the stress on the second **'a'**) is evidently derived from Sanskrit **alabu** and Prakrit **alavu** (with the stress on the second 'a' in both the cases) meaning 'a long gourd without a neck', 'the bottle-gourd' (**Lagenaria vulgaris).** In the **sutra** literature **alabu-vina,** a lute of the shape of a bottle-gourd, is mentioned. Khusrau describes the **alawan** as having strings (**ragha** رگہا) spread outside its body (**az andam birun** از اندام بیرون) and a gourd on its back (**kadu bar pusht** گدو بر پشت). Most probably **alawan** is a kind of **sitar.** It appears to be the most popular Hindi instrument of Khusrau's times and has been most frequently mentioned by him, at least once in the I'jaz and the **'Ashiqa** and twice in the **Nuh Sipihr.**

(ii) **Tal** is the Sanskrit **tala** (with the stress on the first **'a'**) meaning 'cymbals'. Depicting it Khusrau says that it is a brass instrument (**saz-i-biranjin** ساز برنجین) which the player wears in his fingers and the pair of them are like two 'brazen-bodied' champions facing each other in a battle — the above allusion is to Isfandiyar of the **Shah-Namah,** who was called **ruin-tan** روئین تن or brazen-bodied because of his invulnerability. We are also informed that these cymbals kept time like the **daff** in the Persian music.

Abul Fazl has described **tal** as 'a pair of brass cymbals like cups with broad mouths'.

(iii) تبنک **Tabank** or **tubank** or **tubang,** meaning 'drum' or **'daff'.** Depicting the 'Hindi drum' Khusrau accurately describes the paste of unbaked dough (**khamir-i-kham** خمیر خام) on its face, which is applied to the head of the Hindi drum to increase its resonance ; and its braces, **bast**

بست (the printed text has پست) **past** which does not carry sense), which are struck with a hammer (zadah زده lit. 'beaten') for tuning. This instrument must be akin to, if not identical with, the **tabira-i-Hindi** of the **I'jaz-i-Khusrawi.**

(iv) The Hindi **'ajab-rud.** From the letter on the Hindi music which we discussed above it is evident that the Hindi **'ajab-rud** was an indigenous fiddle and that Khusrau was greatly impressed by its "laughing" music. These comments are repeated in the following couplet.

عجب رود از کمین دندان نموده
لبش ئے دهن خندان نموده

'Ajab-rud laughs (lit. 'shows its teeth') with (the finger-tension of) the bow.

It does not have lips but shows its mouth (open, as if) in laughter.

The second line of the above couplet accurately describes the **sarinda** which has an uncovered 'mouth' serving as a resonating chamber. **Sarinda** (سارنده) is the most popular stringed instrument of the common man in the whole of Indusland, i.e. Pakistan. It is called **surando** in Sind and **saroz** in Baluchistan.

Surando has been immortalized by the Rumi of Indusland, Shah 'Abdul Latif Bhitai, in his story of Rai Diach and Sorath which describes how the ruler of Girnar, in Kathiawar, (Rai Diach) yielded up his head as a reward for the 'delightful' music of **surando** enchantingly played by the ill-omened minstrel Bijal and —

All three in tune were wed,
The music's chord, the dagger and the neck.

Three years after the **'Ashiqa** came the Nuh Sipihr when

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Khusrau's nationalist ideals were fully matured and he had become an ardent patriot singing the beauties of "the land of his birth, his refuge, — his motherland" and its rich cultural heritage. The **Nuh Sipihr** was completed in Jumadi 1, 718 (July 1318) when Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah had made considerable progress in his programme of patronizing fine arts. He had a "pleasure-dome" decreed as was done by Kublai Khan in Khan-baliq, thirty years before him. Khusrau has described in the **Nuh Sipihr** the building of this **qubba** (dome), and the "boom" (بازار تیز) which it caused in the construction trade. In this pleasure-dome the dancers and musicians of both Hind and Persia gave their enchanting performances. Thus, the two great musical traditions had a permanent stage where they could meet and work together towards the development of an Indo-Muslim idiom in music.

The Hindi orchestra depicted in this **mathnawi** consisted of only three instruments : (i) **alawan,** (ii) **tal,** and (iii) a stringed instrument, which must be the above-mentioned **sarinda ;** it is described as follows :—

او کشیده تار پولادین بساز
کاهنین دلها فتاده درگداز

(Here is one who has got steel-string spread over his instrument that melted hearts even as hard as iron). — Or, is it **iktara ?**

One of the arguments advanced by Khusrau, in this **mathnawi,** to prove the superiority of Hind over all countries and cultures is its music, which had such a charm that deer were hunted and caught by its hypnotizing power alone. The music of Hind, he contends, "is unique in the world : it is a fact which is known to all, for it is so obvious."

هر همه دانسته که در جمله جهان
نیست بدین گونه و این نیست نهان

To prove this contention of his Khusrau makes a most significant statement :

زانکه بس نعمه سرا از همه سو
امد و اورد روشهائے نکو
ان همه زینجا بگرفتند یگان
تیز دویدند درو تیز تگان
ساخته هم گشت از ایشان قدرے
زاید ازان زاد بسازش هنرے

(The text has بر in the fifth line, which does not make any sense to us. Therefore, we have read it از

(As many musicians came here from all sides and brought with them their excellent styles,

Those from this land got all those styles and made hard practice in them till they outpaced others.

Some of their own (modes) were also invented by them and, thus, by skilful composition (of the two styles) a new music was born.)

So, all the credit for the invention of the new **ragas** (melody modes) through the fusion of the indigenous South Asian and West Asian (Arab and Persian) musical styles is given by Khusrau to the ingenious, industrious, adaptable and syncretic people of the land which he placed "inferior to Paradise and superior to all the world."

گرچه ز فردوس فروتر نهمش
از همه افاق نکوتر نهمش

They (یگان), the unidentified people, in their turn gave all the credit to him. There was thus an ennobling **camaraderie,** mutual admiration and reciprocal love between the people and their Poet.

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Those are the unidentified people who make legends of the historical personalities whom they love and they loved Khusrau most dearly.. But there are also historians and biographers who have written on Khusrau's contribution to the Indo-Muslim tradition of music.

These writings are based on a number of authorities, namely, Abul Fazl, 'Abd ul-Hamid Lahauri, Mirza Faqirullah, Mirza Muhammad bin Fakhr ud-Din (Mirza Khan), Sher Khan Lodhi, and Brindaban Das Khushgu.

In about 1009|1601, Abul Fazl completed his **A'in-i-Akbari.** After al-Biruni and Khusrau's works it was the tihrd landmark in the long quest of the Muslims of the South Asian subcontinent to have a rapport with the environment to which they inescapably belonged. Abul Fazl was a profound scholar. He had all the resources of the great Mughul empire at his disposal. In Akbar he had a patron of arts and sciences who had hardly a peer in the whole history of Muslim India. Despite all these advantages his **A'in** is rather inferior to the works of both al-Biruni and Khusrau. It lacks the scientific objectivity and critical acumen of al-Biruni and poetical sensibility and patriotic pride of Khusrau. But in its own way it is great as an Imperial Gazetteer and sets up a trail which was admirably followed by the successors of the Mughul empire, though they failed to acknowledge their debt to **Abul Fazl.**

In the **A'in** Abul Fazl has devoted a section to the **sangit** (music) of Hind. Having described the **dhurpad rag,** Abul Fazl gives the different names — and presumably styles — that it got in the different parts of the subcontinent. **Inter alia** he states :

وانچه بدهلی بنوازند قول و ترانه نامند روشی است امیر خسرو
دهلوی بهمزبانی صامت و تتار بر روی کار اورد و نقش فارسی و هندی
بر کرفته عشرت افزا شد •

(The styles (of **dhurpad**) that are sung at Delhi are called **qaul** and **tarana.** This is the style which was introduced by Amir Khusrau Dihlawi having mixed the idioms of **samit** and **tatar** with that of **dhurpad.** Thus, by combining the Persian and Hindi forms he created a delightful variety.)

Abul Fazl's statement is quite precise. He neither claims **qaul** and **tarana** to be new **ragas** nor does he attribute their invention to Khusrau. All that he states is that Khusrau introduced new style (**rawish** not **raga**) of singing **dhurpad** by mixing Persian and Hindi idioms of music (**hamzabani**). The people of Delhi gave this new style the names of **qaul** and **tarana.**

According to the greatest authority on West Asian music, H.G. Farmer, **qaul** and **tarana** are not melodies but rather forms of music and were originally parts of the **nauba** (نوبت) **Qaul** was well-known as such during Khusrau's own time and he himself mentions it while describing Persian musical scales (**pardah**) in his **Qiran us-Sa'dain.**

Half-a-century after the **A'in-i-Akbari** come 'Abd ul-Hamid Lahauri's official chronicle of the first twenty years of Shah Jahan's reign, named **Badshah Namah.** He wrote that before Amir Khusrau's times **git, chhand, dhurpad,** and **astiti** used to be sung in Hind, but the Amir introduced the following :—

اول قول که بقانون کیت مشتمل استبر عربی و فارسی به نظم
یا به نثر و بنائ ان بر یک تال است یا دو یا سه یا چار

(First, **qaul,** i.e. Arabic and Persian, poetic or prose, passages sung according to the rules of **git,** based on a single, or duple, or triple, or quadruple **tal** (measure of time).)

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دوم، فارسی، اشعار فارسی با ترانه مبنی بر یک تال فراهم اورده

(Second, **Farsi,** i.e. Persian couplets sung in the **tarana** (form of music) basing on a single **tal** (measure of time).)

سوم، ترانه که بی اشعار اساس ان بر یک تال گزاشته

(Third, **tarana,** i.e. the singing of **tarana** without (words of) couplets based on a single **tal.**)

چهارم، تصنیفی، که بهندوستانی زبان برگزارد و انرا خیال نامید و خیال بیش از بر یکجندی (?) بر سرائیده اند .

(Fourth, **tasnifi,** (lit. related to authorship, i.e. original) which he composed in the Hindustani language and called it **khayal**. (The rest of the text is not intelligible to the present writer).)

'Abd ul-Hamid's definitions of **qaul** and **tarana** seem to elaborate and complement the statement regarding the usage of Delhi as recorded by Abul Fazl. Let us examine the above passage in some detail.

The first innovation attributed to Khusrau by Shah Jahan's historian has been corroborated by the Amir himself, for he has stated in his **Nuh Sipihr** that he asked the pretty **alawan**-player to sing his Persian **ghazal** in the Hindwi style. We shall discuss this very significant quotation from the **Nuh Sipihr** later on.

The second and third items of 'Abd ul-Hamid's list are evidently inter-related and both refer to **tarana,** which is, perhaps, the most radical among the changes that Khusrau is said to have brought in the South Asian forms of music. In the words of a modern Indian musicologist, Dr. Shripada Bandoypadhyaya,

Tarana is (an) entirely different type of music.

Some scholars say that Amir Khusrau being a stranger, could not follow the difficult and high flown Sanskrit language of the Hindus, left the words from the songs and put some meaningless words instead, such as **ta-na-ri-ta-num-diri-diri,** etc. and added to it some technical words (**bol**) borrowed from the musical instruments, (namely), **sitar** and **tabla** and introduced a new style of Hindusthani Music, which is known nowadays as 'tarana'.

The popular conception ascribed to "some scholars" by the Indian musicologist was challenged by the celebrated Indian vocalist, Ustad Amir Khan, in the paper that he read at the Conference on the Music of East and West held at New Delhi in February, 1964. The Ustad showed that "Tarana as a form of singing is meaningful aesthetically as well as linguistically". To prove his contention he has given interesting explanations of some of these allegedly meaningless words, such as :—

Tanan Dar Aa — Enter my body ;

O Dani — He knows ;

Tu Dani — You know ;

Na Dir Dani — You are the complete wisdom ;

Tom — I am yours, I belong to you ;

Yala — Ya-Allah ;

and, Yali — **Ya'Ali.**

'Abd ul-Hamid tends to corroborate Ustad Amir Khan's views. The **tarana** form of music which Khusrau introduced, according to the said historian, was partly **bi-ash'ar,** i.e. without (words of) couplets, and not **bi-ma'ni,** i.e. without meaning or with meaningless words.

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If we read the testimony of the two eminent historians of Mughul times we can conclude that the Amir introduced two new elements in the **tarana** form of Persian music : one, the **dhurpad** mode (**rags**) of the music of Hind sung in **ek-tala ;** and, two, words extraneous to the Persian couplets again sung in **ek-tala.** The second element seems to be an endeavour on the part of Khusrau to make music transcend poetry, which, perhaps, developed later on into an attempt to release vocal music completely from the tyranny of words. Thus, the revolutionized form of the Persian **tarana** became a popular part of the Hindustani music keeping its original Persian nomenclature.

The Amir never claimed to be an expert on "the difficult and high flown Sanskrit language of the Hindus" but, as we have discussed alsewhere, he knew Sanskrit well enough and certainly he was not a stranger in the land of **dhurpad** and sitar. To attribute his efforts for the creating of a synthesis of the West Asian and South Asian music to his ignorance of the language of the land and not to his large-hearted syncretism shows a total lack of appreciation of the life and character of Khusrau on the part of the scholars who were unidentified by the said Indian musicologist

The fourth, and the last, item of the list of musical innovations introduced by Khusrau, according to 'Abd ul-Hamid Lahauri, is related to **khayal** which is the most popular form in the Hindustani style of music.

There is a controversy about the authorship of the **khayal** form of music. The **Tuhfat ul-Hind** and the **Mir'at ul-Khayal** written during the reign of Aurangzib attribute it to Sultan Husain Shah, the Sharqi ruler of Jaunpur (1458-79), which still later writers ascribe to Sadarang, the musician of the court of Muhammad Shah (1719-48) of the later Mughuls.

However, 'Abd ul-Hamid who is the earliest and the most authentic among the above-mentioned writers seems

to be explicit that Khusrau

(i) authored some **tasnifi,** i.e. original, form of music ;

(ii) the poetry sung in this form was, unlike the above-mentioned **qaul** and **tarana,** not in Persian but in Hindwi ("Hindustani zaban") ; and

(iii) he himself named this original form of music **khayal.**

Unfortunately, the last sentence of the **Badshah Namah's** passage under discussion is unintelligible to us, because the text available to us is corrupt at this place. Nevertheless, the first part of the sentence which is clear and explicit corroborates the popular conception that the Amir was the author of the composition of **khayal** having introduced such **bols** as **"Hazrat Khwaja song khelie dhammal"** or **"Pesh-i-Khwaja tum ban than ae".**

Khayal or **khayal-bandi,** i.e. fancy or fanciful virtuosity of style, is among Khusrau's ideals in prose and poetic writings. He aimed at achieving this in his musical compositions also ; hence, he gave this name to his Hindwi compositions.

This new form of music opened a new vista for the development of South Asian music as it used the indigenous common language, Hindwi, as the vehicle of its literary expression. Great masters like Husain Sharqi and Sadarang made greatly significant and original contribution to its development which led to the controversy about its authorship to which we referred above.

Mirza Faqirullah commenced writing his famous **Rag Darpan** ('The Mirror of Melodies') in 1073/1662-63 and completed it in 1076/1665-66. He also translated the **Man-Kautuhal** ('Man Singh's Desire'), a Sanskrit compendium on

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music which was compiled by leading musicians under the order of Raja Man Singh of Gawalior (1486-1517). In fact, Mirza Faqirullah claims both his treatises to be the translations of this authoritative work, but in spite of his two attempts he succeeded in putting in the Persian garb only its synopsis mixed with the material that he indiscriminately collected from other sources. The **Rag Darpan** is the oft-quoted authority, while the Persian translation of the **Man-Kautuhal** is still unpublished; its manuscript which is in the Lytton Library of the Aligarh Muslim University was examined by the late Dr. Abdul Halim, and was used by him for his **Essays on the History of Indo-Pak Music.**

There is a very popular story which is told on the authority of Mirza Faqirullah's **Rag Darpan.** It is related that there was one Nayak Gopal who was the most renowned musician of Telingana and whose palanquin was carried in turns by 1,200 of his devoted disciples. He was on his way to Thanesar to visit the **tirtha** at Kurukshetra and to bathe in its holy tanks. He was invited by 'Ala ud-Din Khalji to have a competition with Amir Khusrau. But the Amir "not daring to meet the Nayak's challenge openly" hid himself behind the throne of the Sultan while the Nayak gave his superb performances for seven successive days. On the eighth day Khusrau presented himself and sang faultlessly in Gopal's own Deccan style all the music that he had sung, which completely bewildered the South Indian master of music. Khusrau added to it by singing in the Persian ornate style and then in those which were his own innovations so that "he snatched the ball of heart from the field of the assembly."

This is an interesting story, but it is difficult to agree with Dr. Halim when he claims it to be "a mile-post in the evolution of classical music in the Indo-Pak subcontinent." The same poor Nayak Gopal who was discomfited by Khusrau not only by his great talent but also by his puckish trick of hiding behind the throne, re-appears in the court of Raja Man Singh and again he was on his way to Thanesar to

have a dip in the holy tanks, with his usual retinue of 1,200 devoted disciples carrying his **palki.** This story, too, is reported by Dr. Halim on the authority of the same Mirza Faqirullah. But the snag is that there is a gap of about two hundred years between 'Ala ud-Din and Raja Man Singh.

As we have already seen the historian of Shah Jahan's reign attributes to Khusrau the innovation of only **qaul, tarana** and **khayal,** and his explanation of the above shows that he never meant those to be new **ragas.** Only a decade after 'Abd ul-Hamid's **Badshah-Namah** came Mirza Faqirullah's **Rag-Darpan** and in that short duration we find that the number of inventions ascribed to Khusrau rises to a score and all the twenty items are claimed to be new **ragas.** A list of these is as follows :—

(1)	**Qaul**	(2)	**Tarana**
(3)	**Khayal**	(4)	**Naqsh**
(5)	**Nigar**	(6)	**Basit**
(7)	**Talelana**	(8)	**Sohila**
(9)	**Muwafiq**	(10)	**Muhayyar**
(11)	**Ghanam**	(12)	**Zilaf**
(13)	**Farghana**	(14)	**'Ushshaq**
(15)	**Sarparda**	(16)	**Firudasht**
(17)	**Ayman**	(18)	**Sazgari**
(19)	**Bakhriz** and	(20)	**Sanam**

Of the **qaul, muhayyar, 'ushshaq** and **bakhriz** have been mentioned by Khusrau himself as musical tunes of the Persian tradition.

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We feel that the most valid explanation for the rapid growth of Khusrau's innovations about 340 years after his death is the eagerness of the master-musicians like Mirza Faqirullah to organize the music of the Indo-Muslim tradition in a neat and popular way. It is quite significant that both Mirza Faqirullah and his junior contemporary and spiritual colleague, Mirza Muhammad, wrote during the reign of Aurangzib who was out to bury music. The grievous danger faced by the Muses had to be averted, and the Indo-Muslim musical tradition had to be arranged and recorded and **protected** from the attack of the Pharisees. And what better protection could be given to it than the saintly parentage of no less a holy man than Hadrat Amir Khusrau? It had the added advantage of credibility, for it was based on **real** as opposed to the **factual** truth. After all, is not the whole Indo-Muslim tradition of music the child of Khusrau's versatile genius?

Mirza Muhammad bin Fakhr ud-Din had a more ambitious plan than that of Mirza Faqirullah. He aimed at compiling a comprehensive work giving a gist of all the Hindi sciences in one volume which he called **Tuhfat ul-Hind** ('A Present from Hind'). It is interesting that it was compiled during Aurangzib's reign for one of his sons, Prince Mu'izz ud-Din, who during the anarchy ruled for a few months with the title of Jahandar Shah. The work was completed in 1086/1675, i.e. a decade after the **Rag Darpan.** One of the chapters of this encyclopaedic work is on Hindi music, which gives useful information about the development of music in different regions, but as regards Khusrau it is in essence not different from the **Rag Darpan.** Like the elder Mirza, the author of the **Tuhfah** also claims to have derived his information from Sanskrit works, but how far he has succeeded can best be judged from the following comment made by no less a person than Sir William Jones regarding his work and those of other akin writers. He states,

> My experience justifies me in pronouncing, that the Moghols have no idea of accurate translation, and

> give that name to a mixture of gloss and text with a flimsy paraphrase or them both; that they are wholly unable, yet always pretend, to write Sanscrit words in Arabick letters; that a man, who knows the Hindus only from Persian books, does not know the Hindus; and that an European who follows the muddy rivulets of Musalman writers on India, instead of drinking from the pure fountain of Hindu learning, will be in perpetual danger of misleading himself and others.

It is unfortunate that Sir William did not know al-Biruni at all; otherwise he would not have made such a sweeping remark.

Sher Khan Lodhi wrote a **tadhkirah** (biographical compendium) of Persian poets named **Mir'at ul-Khayal** (The Mirror of Imagination') which he completed in 1102/1690-91. He imaginatively perceived the close relationship between poetry and music and, therefore, devoted a small section of his work to music, in which information collected from the above-mentioned books has been summarized and very appropriately space also has been given to the explanation of the principles of Persian music.

Brindaban Das, our last authority on the subject, was a resident of Muttra and a good Persian poet having the poetical name, Khushgu (خوشگو) meaning 'eloquent'. He compiled a biography of the Persian poets, named **Safina-i-Khushgu,** which was completed by him in 1734. This quite late authority states that Amir Khusrau wrote "some **risalas** on the science of **Isafa** (اسافه) (which appears to be a wrong transcription for قیافه, **qiyafa,** i.e. physiognomy) and music." Khushgu's **"risala"** apparently refers to the 'epistles' of the **I'jaz-i-Khusrawi.** We have mentioned above his **risala** on music and the same volume also contains one on **'ilm-i-qiyafa,** the science of physiognomy. So, in fact, Khushgu is not adding to our knowledge. But **risala** has also a secondary meaning, namely, 'treatise' — which we feel to

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be the more appropriate definition of most of the **risalas** in the **I'jaz** — and this has led Professor Wahid Mirza to be "easily induced to believe that he wrote, as some biographers assert, a treatise on that fascinating science". Professor Mirza is perfectly correct in expecting Khusrau "to have turned his prolific pen" to music and, certainly, the stray writings of his on the subject which have come down to us and have been discussed on the above pages do not meet our expectations ; they, in fact, increase those expectations. However, Khushgu's statement is not the evidence on Khusrau's having written more on the subject than what has been bequeathed to us, which Professor Mirza seems to imply.

We feel that the different authorities' views regarding Khusrau's musical inventions or innovations presented above touch only the fringe of the issue. To us the main questions are :

(i) how the Indo-Muslim musical tradition developed, and

(ii) what was Khusrau's role in it.

We have at least one indication in Khusrau's own writings that the process of the fusion of the West Asian and South Asian musical traditions, which is the basis and the sum total of all the innovations attributed to him, had started under his own inspiration. In the **Nuh Sipihr** ('The Nine Heavens') all the different **sipihrs** ('heavens') are beautifully rounded off by a **ghazal** which is in tune with the theme of that particular **sipihr.** So, in the third **sipihr** which is entirely on the culture of Hind the poet appropriately asks "that pretty **alawan**-playing Hindwi musician to sing his Persian **ghazal** in the Hindwi way"

مطرب هندئ الاون زن خوش
خزان برہ هندوی این پارسیم

The significance of these two lines gets enhanced if we look at them in the perspective of the statements of Abul Fazl and 'Abd ul-Hamid Lahauri, which have been quoted earlier. The couplet fully corroborates their statements regarding the form of music which is popularly called **qaul.**

In view of the complementary evidences of Khusrau, Abul Fazl and 'Abd ul-Hamid it can now be safely concluded that :

(i) Khusrau initiated the singing of Arabic and Persian verses and phrases in the most popular Hindwi **raga** of his times, namely, **dhurpad** in **ektala** (single **tal**), **ardha-chautala** (duple **tal**), **tin-tal** (triple **tal**), and **chautala** (quadruple **tal**) ;

(ii) he mixed the Persian musical idioms, namely, **samir** and **tatar** with the above-mentioned Hindwi **raga** ;

(iii) upto the time of Akbar this new form of music was in vogue only in Delhi and was known as the Delhi style of singing **dhurpad raga** ; and

(iv) it was called **qaul** which was originally the term for the most popular Persian form of music.

We feel that the above couplet of the third **sipihr** and the passage, we quoted earlier, indicating the contribution of the local people to the process of syncretization give a definitive statement on the fusion of the West Asian and South Asian traditions of music and the resultant development of the synthesis that is called 'the Indo-Muslim tradition'. They implicitly also show Khusrau's role in this great adventure of human soul.

Khusrau enthusiastically admired his own people's — meaning, of course, the peoples of Hind — great propen-

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sities for adaptation, improvization and flexibility and their eagerness to learn new ideas and borrow from other peoples' arts and culture. (He has expressed the same views with regard to languages). This is in sharp contrast with the impressions that al-Biruni formed when he visited the subcontinent. In pain and not in anger he remarked in his **Kitab al-Hind** that :

> According to their (the Hindus') belief, there is no other country on earth but theirs, no other race of men but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge or science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan or Persia, they will think you to be both ignoramus and a liar.

Both the viewers were equally keen, sympathetic, inquisitive, well-informed and sensitive and belonged to the same race, creed and place of origin, but they held diametrically opposite views on the subject and expressed them not only explicitly but forcefully as well.

We are aware that any attempt to analyse these apparently contradictory appraisals of the peoples of this subcontinent would lead us into the discussion of the whole rationale and history of the Indo-Muslim relationship, which is certainly beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, we would confine ourselves to raising the question and to hint at just a few points related to the life and ideals of Khusrau in which part of the answer lies.

We referred above to the great change that came in the top leadership of the subcontinent with the advent of the Khaljis, which is now being called by modern historians 'the Khalji Revolution' and the significance of which is being increasingly realized. In the context of the present question it would be profitable to compare it with the other

great change that came in the wake of Mahmud Ghaznawi's invasions and also brought al-Biruni here. In his **mathnawi A'ina-i-Sikandari** Khusrau has emphasized the great difference between a **jahangir** (conqueror) and a **jahandar** (king). Mahmud Ghaznawi was a **jahangir.** In the very beginning of 'Ala' ud-Din's reign Khusrau warned him against being a **jahangir** and exhorted him to be a **jahandar.** We think that with all his failings 'Ala'ud-Din acted on Khusrau's advice and in that lies some part of the answer. His son, Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah, made a very notable contribution towards the gestation and growth of the Indo-Muslim tradition of music for which due credit has not yet been given to him.

But the most potent factor in this happy development was the sufi movement. It was the accumulative effect of the efforts of the sufi saints like Hadrat Nizam ud-Din Auliya spread over the three centuries that followed Mahmud's invasion which showed itself in the xenophobia of al-Biruni's time giving place to the syncretism of Khusrau's age.

Khusrau as a great sufi saint and poet and as a powerful supporter of the Khalji rulers contributed immensely towards bringing out this change in the minds of the peoples of the South Asian subcontinent. But there is one aspect of this phenomenon in which Khusrau's contribution was unique and not shared by others — and must, therefore, be emphasized. It was his clear perception of the change, its knowledge. To know is to become. By discovering those qualities in his own peoples and through his enchanting poetry making them know it, he gave a direction to the movement, forced its pace and gave it an unending life.

The passages of the **Nuh Sipihr** which are under our discussion also give us an important negative evidence. The said **mathnawi** was composed towards the end of Khus-

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rau's life. He lived only for about six more years after its composition. He treated his subjects in this **mathnawi** with scientific precision for which he minutely marshalled his data. He did not find details to be cumbersome and against the heightened treatment of poetry. In spite of all this, there is not even an implicit reference in it to any one of the innovations of the **ragas** or instruments of which he is supposed to be the author.

On the other hand, there is the evidence provided by some of the best historians of Muslim India. Barani has made a statement on the subject which is a model of succinctness. He writes,

در علم موسیقی گفتن و ساختن کمال داشت

(He attained perfection both in the performing and the making of music.)

Abul Fazl is very precise about giving us an indication as to how he made new music. 'Abd ul-Hamid supplements Abul Fazl's statement and elaborates Khusrau's own broad hints on the subject. The three historians were, like all cultured men of their times, fully conversant with the science of music, but were not too much of an expert in it to lose their historical objectivity. So, we must accept their statements and believe that Khusrau made a number of experiments in musical compositions during the last six years of his life when the flame of his artistic genius gave its final burst. His main contribution was, however, that he brought about that milieu in which such music could be composed and created that harmony in the society which could be attuned with the sublime, ethereal symphony and himself conducting the grand orchestra like a maestro that he certainly was.

That was about the composition of new music and its **ragas.** As for the construction of new musical instruments

we find the legend outpacing the history by still greater lengths. In the **I'jaz-i-Khusrawi**, the **'Ashiqa** and the **Nuh Sipihr** four Hindwi musical instruments are mentioned: **alawan, tal, tabank,** and **kingara,** but no **sitar** and **tabla** which Khusrau is supposed to have invented. But this is only a negative evidence. The popular theory that Khusrau "invented" those two most popular instruments of the subcontinent and that he gave **sitar** its name because the instrument that he is supposed to have invented had three (**sih**) strings (**tar**) seems to be positively rejected by the archaeological evidence because these instruments were carved on the friezes of Gandhara about a thousand years before Khusrau's times.

In a panel found in a stupa at Andandheri near Chakdara (Malakand) two ladies are shown playing on a long handled instrument with a round body at one end. The number of strings is not clear. The instrument is placed in an inclined position with the left hand holding the far end and the fingers of the right hand twirling the strings. Professor Ahmad Hasan Dani under whose expert supervision the site was excavated considers that the instrument is probably a **sitar.** In another Gandhara panel excavated earlier a lady is playing on a two-stringed instrument having an oval belly at one end and a short handle. It is placed horizontally across the body. The strings are played with finger nails. Professor Dani identified it with the **vina.** And then comes our original **sitar,** with three strings. In a Gandhara panel from Swat which for many decades decorated the Guides' Mess at Mardan and is now in the Peshawar Museum, a three-stringed instrument having an oval belly is held by a lady at the chest level with its short handle raised up to the shoulder. In yet another panel, which is preserved in the Lahore Museum this three-stringed **sitar** is being played by a **gandharvi,** "a female music-making genius", who is sitting on a lion and has placed the instrument horizontally across her body. The Peshawar Museum has a relief depicting the hospitable reception given to Maitrakanyaka by

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three nymphs one of whom is playing on a three-stringed **sitar.**

Discussing the musical instruments of ancient Pakistan, as portrayed on the panels of the Gandhara sculpture, Professor Ahmad Hasan Dani writes,

> Usually the drums are barrel-shaped with skins on either face held together by strings and they are beaten on one face only like a **tabla.**

Gandhara panels in the Gai Collection, Peshawar, depicting the life in the Buddha's Palace, portray scenes of playing on musical instruments, among which **tabla** has its place. These panels are described by Professor Dani as follows :—

> While the Buddha and his wife are sitting on a couch, a flute player is intent on his flute across his lips and a drummer has lifted his right hand up to give a beating on a standing drum and his left hand is beautifully engaged with his fingers on another drum lying flat on the ground. **The play is exactly like that of a tabla.** The third broken figure of a lady partly shows a dancing pose. Another panel shows a contrast of pleasure and pathos. The upper half shows the merry-making within the harem. Before the princely couple the singer is up with the song and the **tabla** player sits below. To the right play the harpist and the cymbals and to the left are the dhub-player and flute player — all in a joyful mood of pleasure. But the second scene opens when the music is stilled, the drummers are asleep on their drums, other musicians are gone, the lady is deep in slumber. Only the Buddha is awake. In the dead silence of the night he takes away his bare feet from the stool and places them on the ground with a determination to leave the pleasure of the palace. It is renunciation from the

> worldly pleasure, palace comforts and all the occasions of music and dance. All music is silent to behold the departure of the Buddha in his search for truth.

Thus, it is certain that both the three-stringed **sitar** and **tabla** were the commonly used musical instruments of Pakistan at least since the times of the Great Kushanas. Then, how did their "invention" get attributed to Khusrau in the popular legend which was uncritically accepted as a historical fact by the later writers? Perhaps, the explanation lies in the study of Khusrau's life at Multan. The five youthful years that he spent there were in many ways the most eventful ones of his life, and they left a deep impression on his mind.

It was at Multan that he must have been first introduced to the music of Indusland which was the original music of Hind. The **Rag Darpan** and the **Tuhfat ul-Hind** have recorded that Hadrat Baha' ud-Din Zakariya Multani composed new music by combining different modes of melody. If this is true, which is very doubtful, Khusrau must have learnt his first lessons also in musical experimentation at Multan. But at that time he was engaged in a most unmusical profession, that of guarding the frontier and its fortresses against Mongol hordes. Later, in the mature **'Ashiqa-Nuh-Sipihr** period, which significantly coincides with the late Khalji reign, when he got deeply interested in the music of Hind he must have thought of those handy instruments of Indusland. With his deep insight into music and its theory he thought it best to popularize them among the musicians of Delhi, who must have been already acquainted with them, but needed a genius like Khusrau to show them the immense possibilities of those instruments.

In short, Khusrau gave **sitar** and **tabla,** the old musical instruments of ancient Pakistan, a new lease of life and vast domains of the subcontinent to enthral through their

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melody. This was over-simplified in the language of the legend and in place of introduction — rather, re-introduction — the invention of these instruments was attributed to Khusrau.

But he did revolutionize South Asian music by introducing into it the Persian elements. The new forms that he, thus, created were popularly called **qaul** and **tarana,** and one of these was named **khayal** by Khusrau himself. These measures were fully in harmony with the long-established and highly sophisticated musical traditions of the lands of the Indus and the Ganges, for the basic structure on which the two systems were based, namely, the idea of **raga** in the South Asian music and that of **maqam** in the West Asian tradition were very similar, almost identical. This great similarity has been observed by most of the modern writers on the subject, for instance. Hakim Muhammad Karam Imam Khan, in his **Ma'dan-i-Musiqi** ('The Mine of Music') ; Lachmann in his **Musik des Orients ;** and Arnold A. Bake in his very useful paper entitled 'Different aspects of Indian Music'.

Khusrau himself seems to be aware of this similarity and he attributes it to the highly catholic, receptive and adaptative nature of the peoples of this subcontinent. But he gave only a partial explanation for this very remarkable phenomenon. The diffusion was not one way as is implied in his theory. The Persians had shown similar receptivity for the music of the Indus Valley when during the Sasanian overlordship of the Sind region of modern Pakistan hundreds of musicians of Indusland migrated to Iran to enjoy the imperial patronage there. The story of the coming of Bahram V (420-40 A.D.), better known as Bahram Gur, to the valley of Mehran, his fabulous exploits here, his being married to the princess of the ruling Sindhi chief and receiving the services of 300 musicians in her dowry, — all this sounds a legend though it has been recorded by a most

sober, early Arab historian, Tabari, on the basis of the still earlier Pehlavi histories. Nevertheless, the Sasanian overlordship of the Sind region during the fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian era and the ethnic testimony of the distribution of the Luris and the Jats of Indusland throughout West Asia and their close relationship with the music of that part of the world, are incontrovertible facts which show the trend of the diffusion of musical traditions from the east to the west.

The painstaking researches made by the great Indologist Przyluski on the "Ancient Peoples of the Punjab : the Udumbaras and the Salvas" — that is the title of his monograph — push the story of this trend to the pre-Aryan, Austro-Asiatic, past of the Indus Valley. The anthropological and philological data masterly marshalled by him demonstrate that the origin of all the musical instruments, which use gourd as their component part, must be sought in the pumpkin-ancestorship myth of the Udumbaras of ancient Panjab. The various names of these instruments : **tambur,** tambourine, **tanpura, tumbi, tumbak, tabank,** etc., too, tell the same story. The present-day **doms** or **dombs,** "the low-cast people earning their living by song and music" are, according to the celebrated Indologist, the descendants of the same Udumbaras who gave those musical instruments to the world but lost their own position in the Caste System imposed by the Brahmins, because of their aboriginal Austro-Asiatic descent. But it is interesting to find that, according to the eminent historian of Indian music Professor Sambamoorthy's researches, Audumbari was the name of one of the forms of the **vina** that was played on the occasion of **yajnas** (sacrifices) during the Vedic period.

Khusrau gave a new **elan** to the process of syncretization of the musical traditions of West and South Asia, and a new vitality to the music of the subcontinent. His name became a legend in the world of music. It is, therefore, not

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at all surprising that besides **qaul, tarana** and **khayal,** many more musical forms and melodies that were Khusrau-inspired got enshrined in the popular mind as being invented by the great maestro himself. This legend, too, helped in protecting and promoting the art and science of the Muses in the South Asian subcontinent, for it was associated with the name of a holy saint of consecrated memories.

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